

## Joint Media Release

**From:** Yarra Campaign Against the Tunnel (YCAT)  
& Public Transport User's Association (PTUA)

**Date:** Tuesday, 25 November 2008

**Subject:** Candidates "Sustainability" Ranking, Yarra Municipal Elections

**Contacts:** Freda Watkin, YCAT 0403-526-342 freda.watkin@gmail.com  
Anthony Morton 0405-725-845 amorton@fastmail.fm

**Party Ranking:** A Stephen Jolly & SP Candidates  
B + Greens Candidates  
C- Labour Candidates

**Yarra Campaign against the Tunnel** and the **Public Transport Users Association** have joined forces to score candidates in the forthcoming elections for the City of Yarra.

Candidates were asked to respond to survey questions on the Eddington Report and the proposed Victorian Transport Plan which, though not yet released, will almost certainly preference roads over sustainable public transport and rail freight transport.

Collectively, we were interested in how the candidates/parties would act, if elected, on specific transport issues including the proposed East-West Tunnel, other road tunnel/s, tram priority, clearways and public transport governance.

YCAT Secretary, Freda Watkin said, "Though all candidates, with a single exception, were "saying no tunnel" in their campaign literature there is, in fact, significant differences and a range of opinions on what constitutes sustainable transport in each candidate's position statements".

Just as the construction of the road tunnel will make the construction of an elevated freeway in the west inevitable so will the construction of elevated freeway in the west make the road tunnel inevitable? Either decision will threaten the viability and liveability of inner north, northeast and western Melbourne.

Issues, arising out of the recent transport forum which recommends increasing road transport size to double or even triple B's, designating Hoddle Street as a major transport route and proposing night access to inner city roads and shopping centres is also a major issue for local government.

"We believe voters need to take care when choosing their Council for the next four years as planning and infrastructure is still a major local government responsibility and we have no doubt that councils will be pressured, by the state government, to change local bi-laws to enable the implementation of the Victorian Transport Plan" (Freda Watkin).

"We need to know we have a council which will stand-up for residents and hold their ground. We do not need a council which will only seek to facilitate the process to minimise resident pain and dislocation". (Freda Watkin).

The response to our survey was disappointing and "We have all types, from those who responded positively on all our issues, to those who - astoundingly - took us to task for even wanting them to state a position." (Freda Watkin)

Top marks went to the Socialist Party, represented on the current council by Councillor Steve Jolly, whose commitment, involvement and preparedness to advocate for the residents and sustainable transport was unambiguous.

In contrast, independent candidate Tom McFeely scored an F for supporting the road tunnel and denying that transport is in any way an issue for local government.

"Traditionally, Victoria's local governments have been the strongest lobbyists both for and against State Government policies on roads and on public transport," said PTUA Secretary Tony Morton. "We're not so naive as to think that it doesn't matter who we elect to our local councils, if we want action on sustainable transport and to change the road-obsessed policy of the State Government."

The Greens also scored well on our survey by providing an informed response, a clear commitment to sustainable transport and a commitment to stop the tunnel and oppose the state government's road expansion plans.

The Labour candidates declined to respond to the survey questions but via email reiterated their opposition to road tunnels while supporting rail tunnels and the construction of new roads in western Melbourne.

"No council candidate is perfect," said Freda Watkin, "but we can see that some are a good deal better than others when it comes to sustainable public and rail freight transport issues that will be so important in the coming months and years."